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# COUNSELING TIPS FOR SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS

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# Counseling

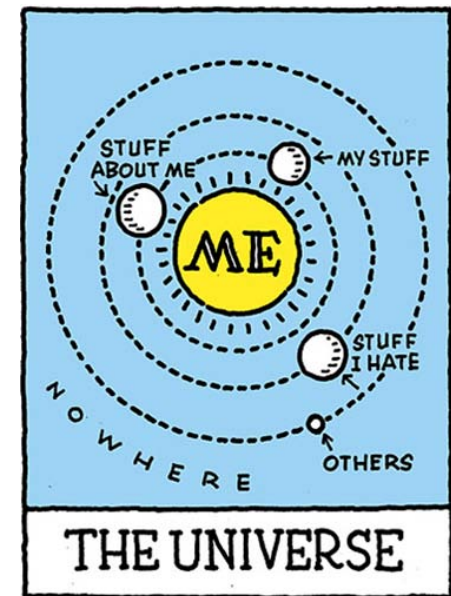
Counseling is a meeting between the supervisor and employee to effect a positive change in the employee's conduct or performance

- It alerts the employee to a deficiency
- It signals that the issue is serious
- It is a required part of the corrective action or disciplinary process



# What's in it for me?

- Supervisors who are effective and decisive in the workplace are invaluable, and may be recognized for opportunities for advancement
- Consistent success from employees can lead to success for supervisors and managers
- Time consuming crisis management may be avoided through regular communication with employees



# What's in it for me?

- Connecting with the people you supervise can minimize workplace problems
- Strong interpersonal skills will make coaching sessions more effective
- Create a climate that values communication



# Supervisor Responsibilities

## Motivate

- Employees look to you to help them understand the goal of their work, to encourage them, to suggest suitable training, and to communicate approval through motivating rewards. They also look to you to help them understand when they are moving in the wrong direction.

## Educate

- Employees look for instruction on how best to perform tasks and meet job expectations.

## Rehabilitate

- Employees who are struggling look to you to help them build competence through training, instruction, feedback and closer review of their work.

# Minimize Workplace Problems

Acknowledge when you have an employee problem, address it timely and appropriately.

Unchecked conduct and performance issues:

- Will not disappear
- Can become the workplace norm
- Will de-motivate higher performing employees
- Can create a toxic work environment



# Employee Responsibilities

## Performance

- Perform the critical elements of their job
- Meet standards for those elements



## Conduct

- Act professionally, responsibly, according to the requirements of the organization
- Act in a manner that promotes the efficiency of the Service

# Is there a problem here?

- Is the conduct or performance affecting the work?
- Is the conduct or performance affecting others?
- Is the conduct or performance getting worse?
- Is there a pattern?
- Is the behavior intentional or due to lack of instruction and oversight?
- Has the employee been responsive to coaching and feedback?



# What kind of problem is it?

Is it a conduct problem? (I won't)

Is it a performance problem? (I can't)

Conduct issues and performance issues have different response rules



# Approaches

## Directive Counseling:

- I talk, you listen
- Useful for misconduct issues, relaying rules and policies, identifying and explaining consequences



## Non-directive Counseling:

- You talk, I listen
- Useful for performance issues where you want to get the employee to discuss problem areas and explore possible solutions jointly



# Counseling to Correct Misconduct

- Timely
- Private
- Directive Approach
  - Specific
  - Clear Expectations
  - Clear Consequences



# Counseling to Improve Performance

- Non-directive Approach
- Open-ended questions
- Have examples ready to discuss
- Patience and perseverance
- Listen Actively
- Use Silence Effectively
- Don't Argue



# Logistics

- Time
- Place
- Organize Information
- Representative (?)



# Preparing for the Session

- Research the Facts
- Opening Statement
- Questions
- Anticipate Questions
- Ending Statement



# Conducting the Session

- Begin the Session
- Stick to the Facts
- Listen Actively
- Ask Questions
- Take Notes
- Ending





# Active Listening

- Active listening is more than just listening to the words the employee is saying
- It includes the tone, behavior and actions of the employee, and you
- It demonstrates to others that you hear and understand by asking follow-up, open-ended questions and paraphrasing to clarify the employee's point
- Use silence to encourage the employee to elaborate





# Ask Questions

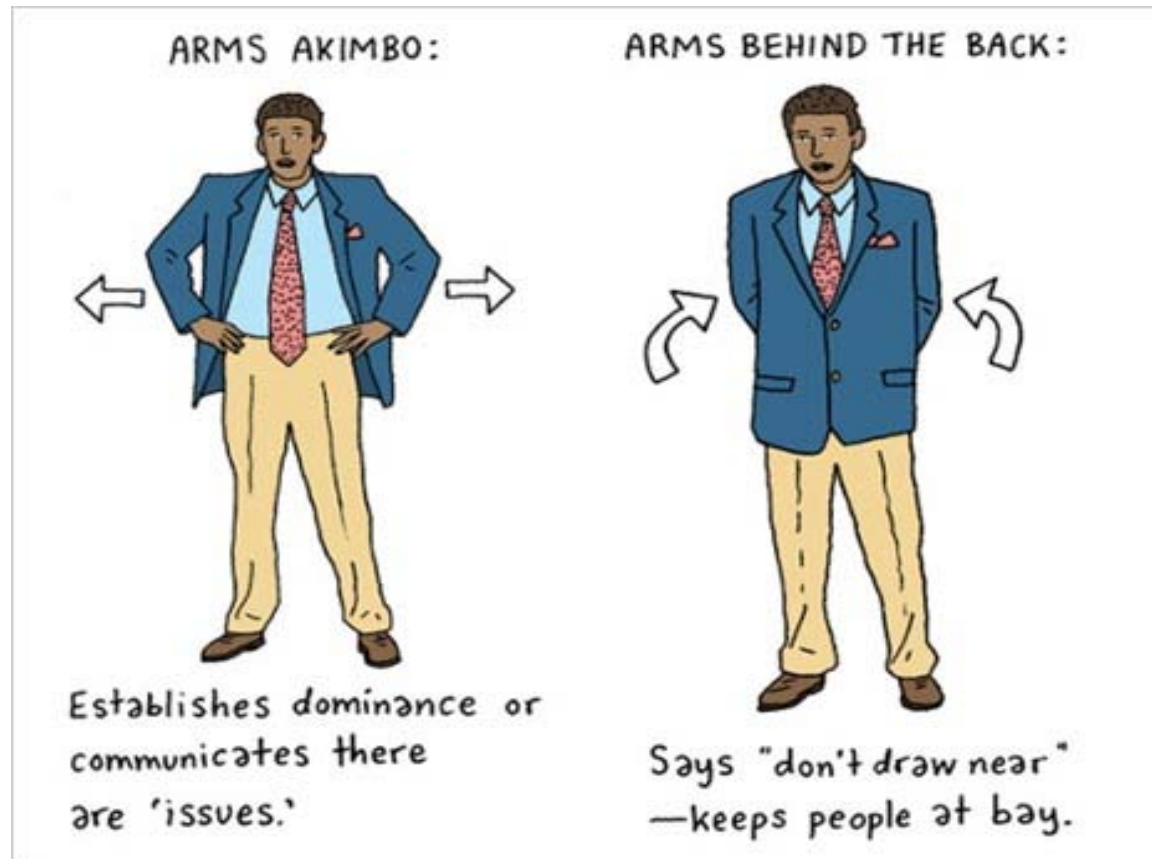
- Questions get confirmation that employees understand problems and expectations
- Questions provide opportunities for employees to respond
- Questions help to keep employees active in a conversation
- Questions help to uncover circumstances that may be contributing to the problem



# Actions Speak Louder Than Words

- What you say is not as important as how you say it, or even what you don't say.
- Your body language says much more than your words.
  - Watch your body language
  - Review your plan
  - Modulate your voice
  - Be sincere and genuine
  - Use “I” or “We”
  - Dress the part

# Body Language



# Body Language



# Body language



# Body Language



# Improve Your Interpersonal Skills

- Be real
- Be empathetic
- Be appreciative
- Communicate clearly
- Resolve conflicts early
- Pay attention to others
- Practice active listening
- Apply self-control and patience



# Improve Your Interpersonal Skills

Positive feedback and recognition are powerful tools for minimizing negative employee situations

- Be timely
- Be specific
- Use “I” messaging





# What would you do?

You observe Myra, an employee, who has just returned from lunch. It appears that her speech is slightly slurred. She also seems to be laughing more than usual. However, she seems to be getting her work done.



# What would you do?

Chris comes to you and complains that he saw lewd photographs on the computer screen of another employee.



# What would you do?

Juan has transferred in from another area. One of your employees told you that Juan is using his Government vehicle to pick up his real estate agent and go look at homes for sale in this area.



# Questions?

